Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Please replace the paragraph starting at page 9, lines 8-10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~FIG. 5 is an explanatory diagram~~ FIGS. 5A-5C are explanatory diagrams showing an example of local region editing probability stored in editing probability model storage means;

Please replace paragraph number [71] with the following rewritten paragraph:

Operations of the second embodiment will now be described with reference to the block diagram of FIG. ~~2~~ 7 and a flowchart of FIG. ~~7~~ 8.

Please replace paragraph number [168] with the following rewritten paragraph:

The image similarity calculation portion 1020 functionally includes the small region similarity calculation means ~~121~~ 1021 and the image similarity calculation means ~~122~~ 1022.

Please replace paragraph number [169] with the following rewritten paragraph:

The small region similarity calculation means ~~121~~ 1021 reads small region feature quantities for multiple reference images from the reference image group small region feature quantity storage portion 25 on an image basis. The small region similarity calculation means ~~121~~ 1021 compares the read small region feature quantity for each of the reference images with the inquiry image's small region feature quantity input from the small region feature quantity extraction means 112. The small region similarity calculation means ~~121~~ 1021 calculates a small region similarity, i.e., a feature quantity similarity for each small region. The small region similarity calculation means ~~121~~ 1021 outputs the calculated small region similarity for each reference image in the reference image group to the image similarity calculation means ~~122~~ 1022. Any method of calculating the small region similarity can be settled according to the small region feature quantity to be used. For example, when the small region feature quantity to be used is a representative value such as an average value, a mode value, or a median value for the small region's color, there is a method of calculating the

similarity based on a distance value and a correlation value in a color space being used. When the small region feature quantity to be used is an occurrence histogram for colors and edge elements, there is a method of calculating the similarity between histograms.

Please replace paragraph number [173] with the following rewritten paragraph:

The image similarity calculation means ~~122~~ 1022 is supplied with the small region similarity for each reference image in the reference image group from the small region similarity calculation means ~~121~~ 1021. The image similarity calculation means ~~122~~ 1022 weights the supplied small region similarity using a small-region-based weight value found from local region weight values supplied from the local region weight calculation means 94. The image similarity calculation means ~~122~~ 1022 calculates an overall image's similarity from the resulting weighted small region similarities. The image similarity calculation means ~~122~~ 1022 modifies the calculated overall image's similarity using the match determination threshold supplied from the match determination threshold calculation means 95. The image similarity calculation means ~~122~~ 1022 outputs an image similarity, i.e., a similarity of reference images in the modified reference image group, to the retrieval result output means 26. Methods of calculating the overall image's similarity include finding a total sum of weighted small region similarities for all small regions and finding an average value thereof.

Please replace paragraph number [174] with the following rewritten paragraph:

If the local region of the local region weight value input from the local region weight calculation means 94 corresponds to a small region of the small region similarity input from the small region similarity calculation means ~~121~~ 1021, the local region weight value can be directly used as a weight value for each small region. When the small region having the small region similarity does not correspond to the local region having local region weight value, the local region weight value may be used to complement the weight value corresponding to the small region having the small region similarity. For example, the local region having the local region weight value may result from further dividing the small region having the small region similarity into multiple smaller regions. In this case, averaging multiple local region

weight values can generate a weight value corresponding to the small region having the small region similarity.

Please replace paragraph number [179] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[Eleventh Embodiment]

The eleventh embodiment of the present invention will be described in further detail with reference to the accompanying drawings. As shown in a block diagram of FIG. 19, the eleventh embodiment of the image similarity calculation system according to the present invention is functionally composed of the feature quantity extraction portion 11, an image similarity calculation portion ~~112~~ 1120, an editing region detection means 113, a local region weight calculation means 114, and a match determination threshold calculation means 115. The feature quantity extraction portion 11 is the same as that provided for the first embodiment.

Please replace paragraph number [185] with the following rewritten paragraph:

The image similarity calculation portion ~~112~~ 1120 functionally includes the small region similarity calculation means 1121 and the image similarity calculation means 1122.

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